

the Department of Veterans Affairs acknowledged that it was "clearly and unmistakably erroneous" in rating Hermann's injury too low. Instead of a 10 percent rating, Hermann's injuries during World War II were consistent with a 30 percent disability rating.

Over these 50 years, Hermann received approximately \$10,000, when he should have actually received closer to \$70,000. Unfortunately, only one week prior to the Department of Veterans Affairs correcting this problem, Hermann Schochenmaier passed away. To further complicate matters, the Department of Veterans Affairs refused to give Hermann's family the disability benefits he rightfully earned.

For the past five years, I have worked with Frances to exhaust every avenue within the Department of Veterans Affairs. The answer was always the same: the law does not allow for veterans' widows to receive these lost benefits. So, I decided that it must take an act of Congress—literally—to ensure that a veteran's widow from Bonesteel received the benefits her husband earned, but was denied from receiving in his lifetime.

Thanks to the perseverance from members of my office, the continued faith of Frances and her family, and some bipartisanship among members of Congress, we were able to pass this important legislation in the Senate and put it on a track to be signed into law by the President before the end of this year.

My wife, Barbara, and I are parents of a son who serves our country in the Army, and we know the sacrifices families make when their loved-ones travel overseas in the military. I am sorry that fate denied Hermann the opportunity to see justice done with the correction of his disability rating. I am thankful that fate and old-fashioned elbow-grease over these past five years has given our country the opportunity to make things right with Frances and the Schochenmaier family.●

#### RECOGNITION OF THE WELLPINIT SCHOOL DISTRICT

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I take the floor of the Senate today to tell you about the hard working teachers, faculty and parents of the Wellpinit School District and their efforts to improve their children's education by bringing technology to the classroom. For their dedication, I am delighted to present the Wellpinit School District with one of my "Innovation in Education" Awards.

The Wellpinit School District is located on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Eastern Washington and educates 440 students of which 95 percent are of Native American descent. The K-12 school has already far exceeded any other rural school in Washington state with its efforts to boost the use of technology in the classroom. Under the direction of Wellpinit's Board of Directors and Superintendent Reid

Reidlinger, Wellpinit implemented an innovative program that includes increasing student access to computers and improving students' use of the internet and intranet.

Wellpinit reconfigured its curriculum, integrating it with a computer program that allows students from both elementary and secondary grades to access an individualized instructional program for any core subject. The computerized curriculum has been highly effective in increasing national test scores. In fact, Wellpinit was named the highest achieving Indian Reservation school based on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Wellpinit has also been selected as one of America's Top 100 Wired Schools by the editors of Family PC Magazine.

Earlier this year, I awarded Quillayute Valley School District one of my "Innovation in Education" Awards for developing the Washington Virtual Classroom Consortium (WVCC), which links rural schools together via the Internet in order to pool resources and expand learning opportunities for students and staff. Wellpinit has joined the WVCC to further enhance the educational opportunities for all students.

Superintendent Reid Reidlinger told me, "Wellpinit has been a model for other schools. Federal grants have helped with bringing technology to our district, and as a result, we have very advanced students."

I commend all those who have contributed to Wellpinit's technology plan and ask that the Senate join me in recognizing the hard work and commitment of the students, teachers and faculty at the Wellpinit School District.●

#### IN RECOGNITION OF TOM WILKENS

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize one of the truly gifted athletes of the state of New Jersey. It gives me great pleasure to extend my congratulations to Tom Wilkens on winning the bronze medal in the men's 2000 meter individual medley event at the XXVIIth Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

Despite having asthma and a severe allergy to chlorine, Tom Wilkens has consistently performed as a champion. At the 1999 Pan Pacific Championships, he won a medal of each color, gold in the 200 meter individual medley, silver in the 200 meter breaststroke, and bronze in the 400 meter individual medley. To this impressive collection, he adds a bronze from the Games of the XXVIIth Olympiad.

Tom Wilkens represents the best of New Jersey's athletes. His outstanding representation of New Jersey and the United States at these Olympic Games is a testament to the dedication that has afforded him success in the face of diversity.

Through his efforts, Tom Wilkens has been able to achieve athletic greatness. His commitment to excellence serves as an inspiration and it is an honor for me to be able to recognize his accomplishments.●

#### TRIBUTE TO MRS. PATTY LEWIS

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the professional dedication, vision and public service of Mrs. Patty Lewis who will be leaving the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee at the end of this year to return to the Department of Defense to serve in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. It has been a privilege for me to work with Mrs. Lewis and it is an honor to recognize her many outstanding accomplishments.

I asked Mrs. Lewis to join the staff of the Armed Services Committee last October to assist me and the other Members of the Committee deal with the complex issues of improving the Military Health Care System, TRICARE, and providing health care to Medicare-eligible retired military personnel and their families. She is superbly competent and demonstrated a level of professionalism which far exceeded that of many of her contemporaries. Mrs. Lewis is an expert at cutting through the red tape of the military health care bureaucracy and never losing sight of the fact that taking care of the individual is paramount. Her focus was always on doing the right thing for our service members and their families.

Mrs. Lewis has earned a reputation as someone on whom we could rely to provide fresh ideas, detailed research, and practical solutions to complex problems. Her professional abilities and expertise have earned her the respect and trust of her colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both Houses of the Congress. Mrs. Lewis' ability to clearly see a viable alternative when others could only see the fog of confusion contributed to the success of the Committee on Armed Services in developing the legislation that will, for the first time in history, definitively entitle retired military personnel to the lifetime of health care that they were promised when they were recruited and reenlisted. With Mrs. Lewis' help, we are finally able to fulfill that commitment.

Mr. President, initiative, caring service and professionalism are the terms used to describe Mrs. Lewis. Patty Lewis is a great credit to the Senate and the Nation. As she now departs to share her experience and expertise with the Department of Defense I call upon my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to recognize her service to the Senate and wish her well in her new assignment.●

#### HONORING INDUCTEES INTO THE HALL OF VALOR

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the veterans who will be inducted into the Hall of Valor at Soldiers' & Sailors' Memorial Hall. On October 14, 2000, 15 veterans, all of whom served in World War II, will be inducted in the Hall of Valor. All the